

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 EUR-12 ISO-00 SSM-03 SSO-00 NSCE-00 IO-13
USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 OC-06
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1127
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 1729

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EG PINT
SUBJ: POST-RIOT DEVELOPMENTS: SADAT REEMERGES

SUMMARY: SADAT MAKES DRAMATIC REENTRY ONTO PUBLIC SCENE,
ARRIVING UNANNOUNCED AND WITHOUT USUAL GUARDS AT CAIRO'S CHIEF
MOSQUE FOR FRIDAY PRAYERS. CROWDS CHEER FROM AZHAR TO GIZA.
QADHAFI JOINS COMMUNISTS AS ALLEGED EXPLOITER OF RIOTS AND
ISLAMIC ESTABLISHMENT AGIN PLEDGES SUPPORT FOR SADAT. PRESER-
VATION OF DEMOCRACY STRESSED, BUT PNGING OF GUARDIAN CORRES-
PONDENT HIGHLIGHTS INCREASED SENSITIVITY OF REGIME. END SUMMARY.

1. MORNING PRESS JANUARY 29 PROVIDES SEVERAL HINTS AS TO HOW
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GOE'S POST-RIOT POSTURE MAY CRYSTALLIZE.

2. SADAT EMERGES AT LAST. PRESIDENT, WHO HAS NOT APPEARED
BEFORE CAIRO PUBLIC SINCE HIS DEPARTURE FOR ASWAN TWO WEEKS AGO,
HAS MADE A DRAMATIC REAPPEARANCE. ALL DAILIES JANUARY 29 SHOW
HIM IN MOTORCADE, DRIVING THROUGH CROWDED DOWNTOWN STREETS
PREVIOUS DAY. SADAT, CAPTIONS STRESS, NOT ONLY MADE UNANNOUNCED

VISIT TO AZHAR MOSQUE FOR FRIDAY PRAYERS BUT ARRIVED IN OPEN CAR WITHOUT USUAL MOTORCYCLE GUARD. A "SEA OF PEOPLE" QUICKLY GATHERED TO GREET HIM, AND CROWDS "CHEERED" FROM AZHAR TO GIZA. MESSAGE IS CLEAR: PRESIDENT HAS DEMONSTRATED THAT HE IS NOT AFRAID OF THE MASSES, THAT HIS APPEARANCE CAN SUMMON CONSIDERABLE SUPPORT, AND, BY HIS ATTENDANCE AT AZHAR, THAT RELIGION IS GLUE OF EGYPTIAN SOCIETY (AND COMMUNIST SABOTEURS ARE ENEMIES OF THE PEOPLE).

3. POINTING THE FINGER. IT APPEARS QADHAFI IS TO JOIN "THE COMMUNISTS" AS A CONTRIBUTOR TO LAST WEEK'S "SABOTAGE." FRONT PAGE STORIES REPORT EGYPTIAN AUTHORITIES HAVE OBTAINED A SECRET LETTER FROM LIBYAN UNDERSECRETARY ABU ZAYD OMAR, DURDAH, DATED JULY 4, 1976, REFERENCE NUMBER 4/4/3055, INSTRUCTING LARGE IMMIGRATION NOT TO PLACE ANY MARK IN PASSPORT OF "BROTHER" KAMAL RIF'AT, DUE TO ARRIVE FROM GENEVA IN TRIPOLI ON THAT DAY. (RIF'AT, A WELL KNOWN EGYPTIAN NASSERIST, HAS BEEN A RELATIVELY OUTSPOKEN OPPONENT OF GOE POLICIES.) AHAM REMARKS POINTEDLY THAT RIF'AT'S VISIT TO LIBYA COINCIDED WITH JULY 1 ARREST OF LIBYAN AMBASSADOR TO CAIRO (FOR DISTRIBUTING SUBVERSIVE LEAFLETS) AND WITH ARREST "NUMBER OF LIBYAN SABOTEURS IN MERSA MATRUH."

4. RELIGION AS A PROP TO THE REGIME. SADAT, WHO REGULARLY NAMES SCIENCE AND FAITH AS THE BASES OF EGYPTIAN LIFE, AND WHO HAS ALLOWED THE STILL BANNED MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD TO REGROUP AS A COUNTERWEIGHT TO THE LEFTISTS, MUST HAVE BEEN PARTICULARLY DISTURBED BY SOME RIOTERS' EFFORTS TO USE ISLAM AGAINST HIM. ONE SLOGAN HEARD IN CAIRO AND ALEX, FOR EXAMPLE, CLAIMED SADAT MISUSED RELIGION AS A DEVICE FOR GOVERNING. SADAT'S CONFIDENTIAL

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DECISION MAKE HIS FIRST (UNANNOUNCED) APPEARANCE IN CAIRO'S OLDEST MOSQUE IS OBVIOUSLY DESIGNED TO RECOUP ANY PRESTIGE LOSS WITH DEVOUT MUSLIMS. HE HEARD A FRIDAY SERMON PREACHED BY POPULAR AND ELOQUENT SHAYKH SHAR'AWI, WHICH (NO DOUBT BY DESIGN) EMPHASIZED ISLAMIC ESTABLISHMENT'S SUPPORT FOR PRESIDENT, WARNED AGAINST REPEATED EFFORTS BY FOREIGN POWERS TO SUPPRESS AZHAR'S INFLUENCE, AND URGED THAT OPPOSITION BE EXPRESSED IN FITTING, LEGAL CHANNELS. IN SAME VEIN, AHAM ANNOUNCES NO MEMBERS OF BROTHERHOOD HAVE BEEN ARRESTED.

5. SELF-HELP. ALL PAPERS CONTINUE PRINT LISTS OF CITIZENS WHO HAVE CONTRIBUTED WHAT THEY CAN TO INDEMNIFY PROPERTY OWNERS (INCLUDING GOE) FOR RIOT DAMAGE. LISTS ARE LONG AND SPECIFIC, AND INCLUDE SOME OF US MISSION'S EGYPTIAN EMPLOYEES. PUBLICATION SUCH CONTRIBUTIONS OBVIOUSLY SERVE AS SYMBOL SUPPORT FOR SADAT, BUT FROM OUR CONTACTS IT WOULD APPEAR THAT MANY IF NOT MOST CONTRIBUTIONS LISTED ARE GENUINE AND REPRESENT OUTPOURING OF NATIONAL PRIDE, ESPECIALLY BY MIDDLE CLASSES. WHILE EGYPTIANS STOUTLY MAINTAIN

THAT WEALTHY ARABS HAVE MORAL DUTY TO HELP, THE OMNIPRESENT EGYPTIAN PRIDE IN BEING EGYPTIAN PARADOXICALLY GENERATES A STRONG AVERSION TO BEGGING FOR ASSISTANCE.

6. SENSITIVITY TO CRITICISM. JUDGING FROM GOE AND PRESIDENCY PUBLIC STATEMENTS AS WELL AS FROM OUR OWN CONTACTS, SADAT IS ANXIOUS THAT RIOTING NOT PROVE SERIOUS SETBACK TO HIS EFFORTS CREATE MORE LIBERAL POLITICAL SYSTEM. NEVERTHELESS, SENSITIVITIES TO CRITICISM ARE ACUTE. RECENT UPI ARTICLE WITH CAIRO DATELINE UNDER HEADLINE "CAN SADAT SURVIVE" (BY RAY MOSELY) DREW OUTRAGED EVENING TELEPHONE CALL FROM FAHMY TO AMBASSADOR. FONMIN WANTED TO KNOW IF ARTICLE "COMMUNIST" INSPIRED, AND SADI IF AUTHOR HAD BEEN RESIDENT IN CAIRO FAHMY WOULD ENSURE HE WAS STONEWALLED (THOUGH NOT PNG'D). EXPULSION OF GUARDIAN'S DAVID HIRST FROM CAIRO (WHICH FRONTPAGE NEWS THIS MORNING) IS ANOTHER INDICATION THAT RIOTS ARE HAVING SOME EFFECT ON LIBERALIZATION. HIRST, WHO APPARENTLY PREDICTED SADAT'S FALL WITHIN SIX MONTHS
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(WE HAVE NOT SEEN OFFENDING ARTICLE), IS, HOWEVER, ONE OF GOE'S LEAST FAVORITE WESTERN JOURNALISTS, AND ON AT LEAST ONE PREVIOUS OCCASION IN EARLY 1974 WAS REFUSED ADMISSION TO EGYPT.

8. GOE AND PARLIAMENT. CABINET MINISTERS CONTINUE APPEAR BEFORE PEOPLES ASSEMBLY. PRIMIN DUE MAKE STATEMENT TODAY ON VARIOUS RIOT RELATED MATTERS INCLUDING BUDGET. LIMITED CIRCULATION ENGLISH LANGUAGE GAZETTE JANUARY 28 CARRIED FIRST STRAIGHTFORWARD PUBLIC DEFENSE OF KAISOUNI WE HAVE SEEN. LETTER TO EDITOR HAILS HIS "MORAL COURAGE," BLAMES "PROPOGANDISTS" FOR FEEDING MISINFORMATION TO THE MASSES, AND LAMENTS THAT KAISOUNI IS SOLE HONEST ECONOMIC PHYSICIAN SINCE ZAKARIYA MUHYI AL-DIN. (IRONICALLY, LATTER'S CABINET WAS DISMISSED IN 1966 BY NASSER FOR ENDORSING IMF'S STRINGENT FINANCIAL PRESCRIPTIONS.)
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